



December, 1987
\$1.25

SUBURBAN CHICAGO ATARIANS

AN INDEPENDENT COMPUTER USERS' GROUP

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President's Corner

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The Newsletter

If you felt that your October and November Newsletter were late, you are right! Due to no fault of Bob Dillon, who had resigned as editor, the Newsletter was not prepared or mailed. As you can see by reading this issue, things are back on track and we are pleased that Bob has agreed to resume his excellent services to SCAT. He informs me that there is a backlog of materials for the 16-bit machine, but articles for the 8-bit are fewer. If you have an idea knocking around for a review or article for the 8-bit, contact Bob Dillon or the 8-bit editor, Jill Des Jardins. They will assist you in getting that idea into print for our next Newsletter.

Officers

Following the November meeting, the Executive Board of SCAT met. At that time we were informed that Jeff Williams will not be able to continue as SCAT President due to other commitments and has resigned. The Board moved and voted to appoint Ken Reid as club President for the balance of the term. As that action left a vacancy for Vice President, Mike Yocum was elected by the Board to fill the term. I hope that all club members will offer the new officers support in the months to come. I am very pleased that Mike will be able to fill-in as Vice President. We both will make efforts to listen and respond to feedback from you on all matters Atari and SCAT. You can reach us at the numbers listed at the back of the Newsletter, or if you have a modem, you can leave messages for us on the SCAT BBS.

Holiday Party

Here already? It can't be but it is. SCAT will be having its annual Holiday Party again at the December meeting. We will provide the chicken, soft drinks, and plates. We need you to bring cookies and other snacks to share. This will be a "Members Only" party so you and your family are welcome to come and enjoy yourself in Room 1024 of College of DuPage (That's the same room we were in last year). As in past years, we will also sponsor an auction of computer software, equipment, and accessories with a percentage going to a needy family (see below). There will also be a swap of new and used goods (originals only) before the meeting. For further information feel free to contact Mike Yocum at 469-4490. He has agreed to coordinate this year's party and I am sure he could use help in set-up and arrangements.

Needy Family

It has become a tradition with the SCAT Club that members share a little of what they have around the Holiday season with a family less fortunate. Last year we saw around \$500 go to a couple that was in desperate need of cheer for their two little ones. This year we are again hoping that club members will open their hearts to help those in need. We will contribute the cost of all PD disks bought from our library this month to the Needy Family Fund as well as a 10% for all auctioned goods. Those who want to donate items to the club to auction will be thanked and for those who contribute cash amounts over \$10 will be given their choice of a library disk. Receipts are available for your tax records. This season should be special for everyone - let's do what we can to make it happen.

See you at the party!
Ken Reid

ATARI MEANS BUSINESS

A Report from the 1988 Comdex
By Anita Malnig, START Editor

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Atari intends to give the likes of Sun Microsystems and Apollo Computers a run for the money with Abaq (the root word for abacus), the new transputer-based workstation that the company is showing here.

By using RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computer) architecture, the workstation will operate at 10 MIPS (million instructions per second). The latest graphics hardware and the IMS T-800 -- the Immos Company's 32-bit microprocessor -- combine to form affordable, powerful personal workstations. A single transputer can deliver over ten times the power of an IBM PC AT. However, there's even greater strength in numbers. You can connect two, 10, 100 or even MORE transputers to create a relatively low-cost computer workstation with the power of a supercomputer. (Talk is that the price will be in the \$5000 range.) When attached to a transputer, the ST or Mega acts as the input/output device for the system. Transputers can be linked via a built-in high-speed serial port to form a multiprocessor array or a local area network.

Helios, the Unix-like operating system, was developed by the Perihelion Company in Great Britain, as was the transputer board itself. The Helios operating system encourages the use of many small programs which work together to create a final product.

Shiraz Shivji, Atari's vice president of research and development, expects that the transputer will be used primarily in engineering and science applications. Included with Abaq will be a very high resolution monitor, capable of four graphics modes: 1280 X 960 in 16 colors or monochrome; 1024 X 768 in 256 colors; 640 X 480 in 256 colors with two screens; and 512 X 400 in 16 million colors plus overlay. No firm delivery date is set, but late 1988 seems to be the most talked-about time frame. From a first-hand view, the crisp, vibrant prospects (such as four separate pictures running simultaneously) were drawing crushing crowds.

CD-ROM FOR ATARI

The exciting CD-ROM player introduced at Comdex can read up to 540 megabytes of data or play music. It connects to Atari's ST and Mega computers through the DMA (direct memory access) channel, a communications port that transmits data at up to 10 million bits per second. At \$4000, the player can store more data than 1,000 floppy disks or 200,000 printed pages.

Demonstrated at the show is an English and French visual dictionary from Facts on File. It is categorized by topics such as transportation and foods; click on the transportation theme and choose from an array of topics such as ferries, container ships, airport terminals and so on -- all items illustrated. Speech output identifies each image in French and English. Grolier's Encyclopedia also runs on this CD-ROM, as do audio CDs. Atari has a task force at work now developing more products for this player, which will be available at computer specialty dealers and retail outlets in February, 1988, at a suggested retail price of \$599.

DO ATARI DESKTOP PUBLISHING

G.D. Graphics, in conjunction with Atari, will bring to market a sophisticated desktop publishing program called Deskset. This works as a front end to the CompuGraphics typesetting equipment, offering the use of 1,800 fonts. This is not just a desktop publishing program for four-page newsletters and the like: it could design entire publications such as Antic and START. It will output to such laser printers as the striking Atari laser printer, also being demonstrated with Deskset.

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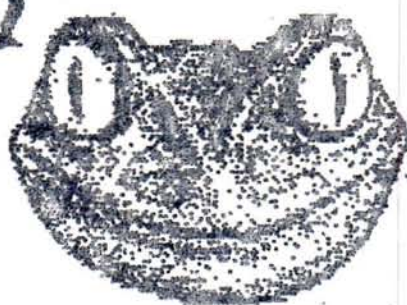
Programming Languages:

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Alice Personal Pascal
GFA Basic Interpreter
and Compiler
4X Forth
Mark Williams C

*The ST is my favorite
computer of all...*

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We now have Dr. T's
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& 27, and the new FB-01
and TX-81Z.



*I get my software
at COZ Computers*

New Educational Software for the ST

from Michtron
Unicorn
& the Atari Arrakis Series

camera to the Palette. The package yields overhead transparencies and printouts. It will retail for \$400.

Antic Software is also showing Spectrum 512, its 512-color paint program, which expands the ST's normally limited palette of 16 colors to 512. Spectrum 512 can load and enhance pictures from existing ST software as well as from Amiga picture files. Available now for \$69.95.

Animation comes from Antic Software as well with Cyber Paint, also \$69.95. It emulates the functions of a \$100,000 Quantel Paintbox -- but for computer graphics instead of live video. Cyber Paint is a member of the Cyber family of desktop video products. Its many features include smooth raster tweening along any 3-D path, professional optic effects with planar rotations through 3-D space, and moviola-style cut-and-paste.

MORE BUSINESS BITS

The Informer from Regent Software is a multi-table database with presentation graphics. Easy-to-use point and click functions let you create and manipulate up to four databases at once. You can import graphics from DEGAS and NEOchrome... From SBT comes the Database Accounting Library, menu-driven with options to confirm, change or cancel entries... Hi-Tech Advisors announces Super Sales Pro, a full-featured point-of-sale inventory control software system for the ST. It will accommodate medium- to larger-sized wholesale, retail or mail order businesses. The company will provide free technical support... From Progressive Peripherals comes Superbase Personal, a relational database, and the Logistik time/project management system... B.E.S.T. Inc. offers B.E.S.T. Business Management, an integrated accounting system offering general ledger. Available now, suggested retail price is \$395... ISD Marketing, which brings you the well-known VIP, now has the MasterPlan financial spreadsheet featuring the GEN environment with pull-down menus, icons, scroll bars and column grabbers. It offers graphics features as well. Also from ISD is an update to STAccounts, the integrated accounting package... From Royal Software comes additional low-cost business programs such as Help Calc, templates for their E-Z Calc and VIP. Coming soon will be Inventory Master for \$99.95.

MIDI

Hybrid Arts was showing ADAP and ADAP 2, the digital editing system. ADAP 2 works directly with a hard disk. Also just released is Easy Score, Hybrid Arts' new scoring program.

NEW HARD DRIVE

In mid-December ICD will ship its new 100 megabyte hard disk for \$1,699.

WRAP-UP

Comdex closed its after a five-day convention that attracted more than 90,000 delegates. Exhibitors paid \$27.95 per square foot to the Interface Group for space at the show, which Comdex leased from the Convention Authority for 15 cents a day per square foot. In addition to the plethora of products at the Atari booth was a variety of items scattered throughout the Las Vegas Convention Center and various hotels.

From Quantum Microsystems Inc., (QMI) comes a low-cost graphics tablet for the ST. The ProTablet ST replaces the mouse pointer device with an accurate digitizer tablet and stylus pen. It works with programs such as Bratix, Degas, Easy Draw and CAD 3D. The tablet has a working area of 12.0 x 8.0 inches and a physical dimension of 17.5 x 11.0 x 1.2 inches. It's available now and has a retail price of \$395.

ChartPak from Abacus software lets you do business graphics on your ST. Create visual messages from raw numerical data. Use clip art or pictures from PaintPro or Degas-compatible programs. It's on the market now.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

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Capture images from your video camera, tv, vcr or whatever - IN COLOR. Great for hobbies, entertainment, even desktop publishers. Includes software & hook-up to your ST.

**The Animator/Aegis \$79.95**
If you've seen the great MARS-CALL graphics in SDI by Mindscape, then you already have a good idea what this program can do. And it's so user-friendly that even we Martians didn't need to look at the instruction manual! Features include "tweening", which lets you create the 1st & last cells, and the computer does all the work in between. Highly recommended.

The News Station \$26.95
Finally a typesetting program that is easy to use, mixes graphics with text, & prints what you see on your screen - to scale! REQUIRES: 8-bit Atari, 48k, Epson/Gemini/Panasonic or Prowriter printers.

ALSO AVAILABLE:
QUICK PIX PC MAC II, 1020 PRINTERS
PR-CONNECTION, US DOUBLER, RAMBO XL
AUTATEX 1200 & 1200HC, VOLKSMODEMS

Atari XE Game system is out!

Reprinted from Zmag/A/zine, Chicago edition

I took a run over to a mall this weekend and was able to verify that the XE Game system is out. The most interesting thing is that when a preview of the XE65 was given in the Spring issue of Atari Explorer, the release date of the system was given as "Fall of 1987." Here it is, fall of '87, and the system is actually out! Could this mean that CD-Rom will be out next year? The implications are scary.

Since Christmas is coming up, this is the perfect time to convince those friends of yours that have shown interest in computing that the XE65 might be a good start.

The system comes with 3 games:

Missile Command (built in)

Bug Hunt (uses light pistol)

Flight Simulator 2 (uses keyboard)

The system comes with Atari BASIC built in and also comes with a standard Atari XE keyboard. It has an SID port (so

you can add a disk drive) that insures a computer that is completely compatible with existing Atari 8-bit computer system.

To get its game library going, Atari has re-released a number of game cartridges with a sticker indicating that the games can be used with an XE computer or the XE Game system. There are a number of new cartridges coming, including quite a few that were previously only available on disk: Archon, One on One Basketball, Lode Runner, David's Midnight Magic, Hardball, Fight Night, Star Raiders 2, Blue Max, BallBlazer, Rescue on Fractalus, and Karateka.

New games that haven't been available previously include: Food Fight, Battlezone, Crossbow (for use with the light gun), and 2 shooting games.

The system costs \$150 and is available at Toys R Us and KayBee toys. If you currently own an 8-bit system and would like to play the previously mentioned games, don't worry. The cartridges will work with your current system.

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GLOSSARY OF COMPUTER TERMS

The 1st in a series to help the computer illiterate

=====

- A -

ABORT - When the bus is full, the conductor shouts, "All Abort!"

ABSOLUTE ADDRESS - Where she really lives, not where she told you she lives.

ABSOLUTE ERROR - To buy a computer.

ACCESS - A large, painful boil on the chips from too much hacking.

A/C CONVERTER - A physician specializing in bi-directional surgery.

ACCURACY - Something impossible for programmers to attain.

ADDER - The part of a cow that counts how much milk is left.

ADDRESS - What binary hackers wear when not wearing a suit.

ALGOL - What you sneak into the punch at hacker parties to liven them up.

ALGORITHM - An unsteady gait as the result of too much algol.

ALPHA - Last name of "Little Rascal" star, Alf.

ANALOG - Banana and ice cream treat; good with jimmies.

ALPHABETIC - A blood condition resulting from too many acronyms.

AMBIGUITY ERROR - When something is definitely wrong, or maybe not.

ANSI - A hacker who can't sit still.

APPLE DOS - Apple Rx (DOSE?)

ARITHMETICAL SHIFT - Going from 1st TO 4th gear without skipping 2nd and 3rd.

ARPANET - The government computer network, i.e., the fine mesh we're in.

ARRAY - Spontaneous exclamation by a hacker when something works for a change; rarely used.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE - Anybody who needs a machine to tell them what everybody else already knows, e.g. a computerist.

ASCII - The key to your girl friend's apartment.

ATTENUATE - Response to cannibal who's eaten the very best and asks you to rate it for him.

AUTOMATIC CHECK - The one you write every month to your software supplier.

AUTO-ANSWER - Similar to Dial-A-Prayer, but instead of a clergyman, you get Mr. Goodwrench.

AUTO-REPEAT - A key which, when held down, when held down, when held down...

AUXILIARY MEMORY - What you go to when she doesn't believe you were "working late at the office," e.g. "The train was hijacked to Cuba."

DCS Systems

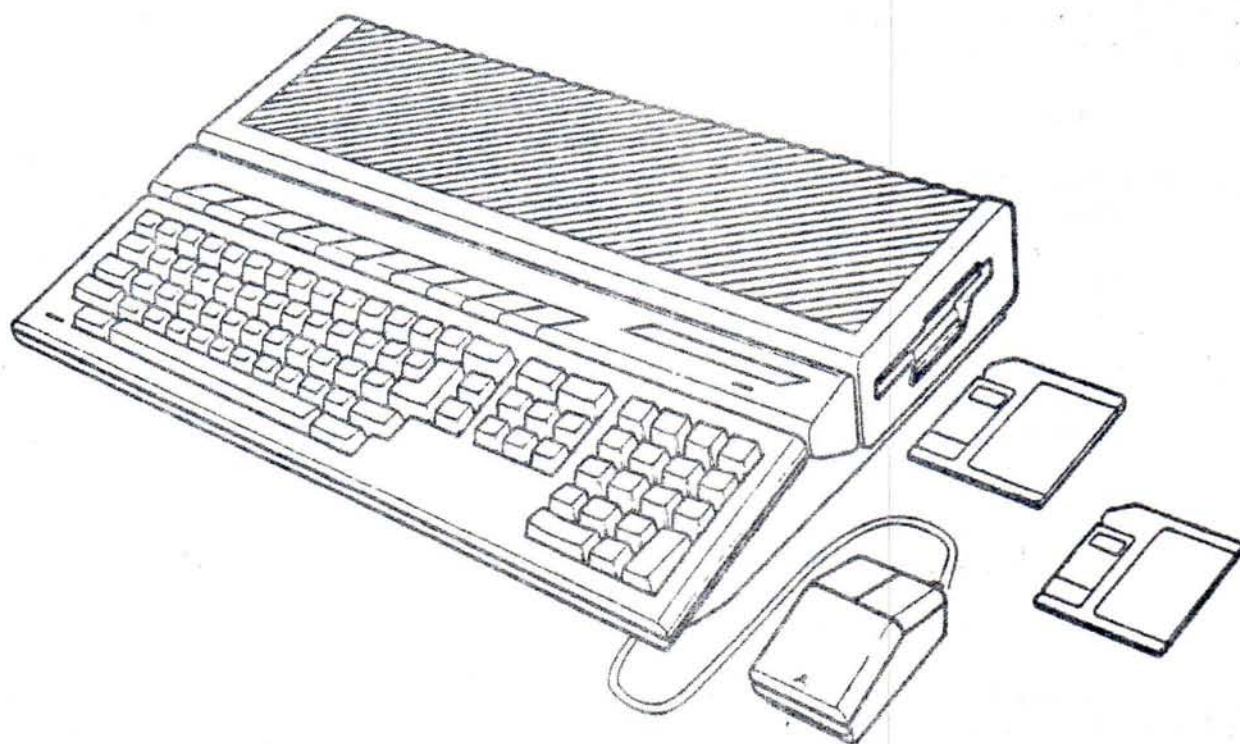
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- 196,608 bytes ROM.
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- 512 colors.
- Selectable graphic resolution:
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 - 640 x 200 x 4 colors.
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- Midi In/Out ports.
- Industry standard parallel interface port.
- RS232C serial modem port.
- Floppy disk port (including controller) for 2nd disk drive.
- Hard disk port.
- ROM cartridge port.
- Mouse and joystick ports.

TECHNICAL DATA:

- MC68000 microprocessor; 32-bit internal, 16-bit external architecture.
- Clock speed 8 MHz.

REQUIREMENTS:

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computer and plug it in.

Booting it...

Turn on the SH204. The lights on both drives should come on and you should hear them coming up to speed. If you do not see this, turn the drive off, you have hooked up something wrong, and you had better hope it wasn't the power cable. Both drives should boot, but one may take longer than the other. Wait until both drives are up to speed and all lights are off before you turn the computer on. When you boot your system, do it with the Supra software and watch the drives while it is booting. Both drive lights should flash. If they don't, check for a twisted cable and check the drive select jumper on your new drive.

Up and running...

Run SUPFMT.PR6. Click on DRIVE NUMBER and set the LOGICAL UNIT NUMBER (not the SCSI number) to 1. Click on OK and the program should say hello to the new drive. If it already has an Atari ST format you won't need to re-format it, its partitions should be good. Otherwise, set the drive type to whatever type your drive is and format the drive. If you have problems at this point, like the drive won't format, you may have to hook the new drive up as logical unit 0 (in place of the old drive) and format it. I had to do this because the old format on my new drive was not Atari ST format, and for whatever reason, the Supra software

couldn't format it. I eventually had to use HDX, then hook up the drive as unit 1, after which it worked fine. Maybe this was because I mucked up the drive's format before I had it hooked up right.

One more problem...

For some reason, SUPBOOT makes all drives from C-P available, whether they are valid partitions or not. This makes it extremely difficult to use a Ramdisk. I had to modify my custom configuration program to shut off the invalid drives by changing the system variable DRVBITS (at \$4C2-4C5). After this it worked fine, and I now have 40Mb.

Some advice...

Build a new box for your drives, one with a fan in it so that your drives don't overheat. They are very prone to this, since they need adequate ventilation. And don't make the cables too long, the drive's peak data transfer rate is 5 megabits per second.

If you have any trouble you can call me in Ottawa after 6 at (613)825-1499, or leave me a message on the Atari Access BBS in Toronto.

P.S. Please excuse my spelling and my grammar. I used to use a Mac and am now a little warped.

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the wisest business strategy to adopt. However, don't look for improvement in short-term profitability. It has been rumored that Sam Tramiel wants Atari Corporation to evolve into an electronics retailer similar to Radio Shack in concept and this is the first step in that direction.

- In May, 1986, Federated Group signed an agreement with Commodore to market the Amiga. I do NOT know how sales of the Amiga have been. However, this situation presents a very interesting business relationship. First, does Atari/Federated want to terminate the relationship with Commodore? Second, if it does, it will take some time for the stores to gear-up and emphasize Atari computer products. This will not occur prior to the holiday buying season. Again, no short-term positive impact on sales.

Another option available to Atari in the short-term is that these stores could be an attractive outlet for its game machine/cartridges and the newly packaged low-priced 520 ST. This looks like a manageable market strategy.

C. FOURTH QUARTER SALES OUTLOOK:

A recent report in the Wall Street Journal caught my attention. Infocorp, a market research firm, has predicted that personal computer sales will rise by 20% in the 4th quarter. In fact one firm, Entre Computer, believes sales might jump as much as 25%.

What's driving this outlook? Well, according to Infocorp, businesses are moving up to more powerful computers and the low prices in the home computer market are encouraging people to upgrade or buy their first computer.

Such an outlook augurs well for Atari. Couple an expanding market, new products, and new retail outlets for low-priced models (including IBM-PC clones) with on-site service centers, 4th quarter sales could rise beyond the projected industry average.

One key to reducing the risk for anyone contemplating a short-term ATC stock purchase is to get more information on how Atari plans to handle the 65 retail outlets. I called Sig Hartmann for Atari's view. Unfortunately, he was in Europe and will not return until after press time. One fact is that Atari stock has dipped since the purchase of Federated and as of September 19 it stood at \$11 per share - off by roughly 23%.

On the positive side, the overall computer market is trending upward and Atari should benefit - particularly if the Megs and clones are available in sufficient supply to satisfy U.S. demand (no vaporware). Also, don't forget 65-70% of Atari's sales are overseas and the word from Europe is that demand continues to exceed supply. Thus, earnings for the 3rd and 4th quarter for Atari should be up. The question is how much and will they satisfy market

expectations?

Third quarter earnings will provide a vital key. While there is risk involved, I plan to hold my ATC stock, maybe even purchase a FEW more shares and re-evaluate in mid-November when more information on 3rd quarter results is available and the trend in holiday sales is more certain.

NISBLEBITS

My June column raised some questions concerning Trip Hawkins, the founder of Electronic Arts, and his attitude towards the Atari ST. The column as usual was finished by May 15th, 2 weeks prior to publication. I have since downloaded a text file composed of individual messages from late June found on Genie (# 3299). Basically, each message berates EA and then turns around and asks them to support the ST (the logic escapes me). EA responded stating that they have released top-flight software for the ST (taking credit for Batteries Included programs which in less diplomatic terms could be labelled plagiarism).

If EA really believes what they are releasing from their OWN efforts is good software, bully for them. Personally, there still is no compelling reason for me to buy one of their software titles. Of course, you may do what you want, but I don't reward arrogance.

ATARI SCUTTLEBITS

By Bob Kelly

ATARI and It's Competitors

Prior to "Black Monday" (October 19, 1987), the stock market had been in a period of decline since August. Atari stock at closing on October 16, 1987 stood at \$10, down over 30% in the last month and a half. Rumors about Atari continued to circulate in the user community: Gary Tramiel was focusing on shaping-up Federated stores while Sam runs Atari, implying, of course, that Jack lost interest in running both; dealers didn't have the new products on the East Coast and Canada, implying either poor management or a break down in the Far East supply chain. The rumors multiplied and I could not verify a single one of the many. Complicating the picture is one known fact, Atari fired the last three successive Vice Presidents for marketing, faster, it seems, than the blitter chip can refresh the screen.

To the outside world, this turmoil makes Atari seem not only to be at war with itself, but also with its customers. Thus, by either inference or divine judgement many investors believed something to be wrong in the house of Tramiel. Now along comes Black Monday, the stock market falls by 508 points. Atari's stock (ATC) drops another 20% to \$8 per share. Coupling the general economy-wide factors negatively

NOTICES

SCAT general meetings are held on the first Saturday of each month at 11:00am. See the calendar for dates. The location is the College of DuPage - Student Resource Center, Lambert Rd. between Roosevelt and Butterfield Rds., Glen Ellyn, IL.

The SCAT Newsletter is a publication of the Suburban Chicago Atarians. Any comments or questions should be addressed to SCAT via P.O. Box 72266, Roseville, IL 60172. Or call any of the following officers:

The Beginner's SIG meets at the College of DuPage at 10:00am (one hour before the regular meeting). (Chairman: Tom Bartelt 637-5379 & Dan Hirschfeld 966-7187)

The SIG meeting are a little up in the air right now, so come to the party and we'll make some decisions.

The schedule and location of meetings are subject to change so be sure to look in the most recent newsletter for the correct date.

The deadline for submission of material or advertising copy for the newsletter is the 10th of the prior month. All material received after that date will be considered for inclusion in a future issue.

Ken Reid	President	893-2913
Mike Yocum	Vice President	469-4490
Rob Rogers	Treasurer	824-0588
Ron Ufkin	8-bit Librarian	636-3345
Kris Cosentino	16-bit Librarian	472-0476
Jeff Jirsa	Secretary	
Bob Dillon	Newsletter Ed.	639-1412
Jill Des Jardins	8-bit Editor	893-9119
John Szesnek	Sysop	462-9833
Steve Sikorski	Adventure Master	830-0667
Bob Schuricht	President Emeritus	894-4334
24 hour Bulletin Board System		462-9844

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S. C. A. T. Suburban Chicago Atarians

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Dues for SCAT are \$15.00 a year per family. Additional membership cards are available for \$1.00 each. To join, just fill out this questionnaire and bring it to the next meeting. If you are unable to attend the meeting, you can send it to: SCAT, P.O. Box 72266, Roseville, IL 60172

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Area Code _____ Phone _____

8-BIT:

Number of computers	_____	Newest Model	_____	Memory	_____K
Modified?	_____	How?	_____		
Number of Disk Drives	_____	Brand(s)	_____		
Density	_____	Modified?	_____	How?	_____
ATM?	_____	Configuration	_____		
Cassette	_____	Modem (Brand)	_____	Interface	_____
Printer (Brand)	_____		_____	Interface	_____

16-BIT:

Number of computers	_____	Newest Model	_____	Memory	_____K
Modified?	_____	How?	_____		
Number of Floppy Disk Drives	_____	Model(s)	_____		
Modified?	_____	How?	_____	Hard Disk?	_____
Modem (Brand)	_____	Printer (Brand)	_____	Size	_____MB

Programming: Check the programming languages you use

None	_____	Action	_____	Assembler	_____	Basic	_____	C	_____	Cobol	_____
Fortran	_____	Lisp	_____	Logo	_____	Modula2	_____	Pascal	_____		
Pilot	_____	Prolog	_____	RP6	_____	Other(s)	_____				

Pay Telecom Systems: Check if you use the service

American People Link	_____	CompuServe	_____	Delphi	_____	Source	_____
Games Computers Play	_____	TC9	_____				
Other pay service (please specify)	_____						

Do you own another brand of personal computer? _____
if so, which? _____